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## Chemours: GenX could have been discharged since 1980

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### Chemical likely created as byproduct of another process at Fayetteville Works site

WILMINGTON -- The GenX in the Cape Fear River is likely a byproduct of another chemical process, Chemours officials told state and local officials during a meeting Thursday.

Beginning in 1980, Chemours had a vinyl ether process operating at its Fayetteville Works site about 100 miles up the Cape Fear River from Wilmington -- a process that produces GenX as a byproduct.

The company does not, officials said, emit any GenX from its manufacturing process into the Cape Fear River -- thereby adhering to the 99 percent capture limit set out in a 2009 EPA consent order allowing the company to sell the chemical.

Last week, the StarNews reported teams of researchers had found a new chemical compound called GenX in the Cape Fear River on at least three occasions beginning in 2012. During testing in 2013-14, the sampling revealed water in the Cape Fear Public Utility Authority's (CFPUA) intake, with the measurements averaging 631 parts per trillion. The utility is unable to filter the compound out of the water before it is sent to distribution lines.

In the days since the report, public and state officials have scrambled to learn more about the chemical and its impacts on human beings -- prompting Thursday morning's meeting.

The reports prompted the N.C. Department of Environmental Quality to launch a formal investigation into the matter.

GenX belongs to a family of man-made chemicals known as fluorochemicals, a group that also includes C8, the chemical it replaced. DuPont and spin-off company Chemours ceased production of C8, also known as PFOA, in the face of steadily mounting legal challenges and a body of research indicating dangerous health effects.

Complicating matters is GenX's status as an emergent chemical -- it was first produced commercially in 2009. That means there is not a large body of research showing its effects and state regulators don't have federal standards they can enforce.

Several dozen protesters -- many holding signs -- also showed up at the New Hanover County Government Center Thursday morning, demanding to be let into the meeting. Another protest, which drew about 100 participants, took place along the riverfront in downtown Wilmington.

Some key points from Thursday's meeting between Chemours and Wilmington-area officials:

- "Our belief is that the GenX level in the drinking water coming from the Cape Fear River is safe and it does not pose any harm to human health. We have that belief; we're confident in that belief." -- Kathy O'Keefe, Chemours product sustainability director
- GenX from the production facility that produces the compound isn't escaping into the Cape Fear River.
- "With that abatement technology that was put in place in November 2013, we have models that calculate the efficiency and how much is reduced of the emissions and that's about 80 percent reduction" ... 631 down to about 100 ppt ... "These are calculations. They are not actual samples that have been taken and we recognize it would be better to have actual samples that have been taken; I think that's what your expectation would be." -- O'Keefe
- "Unfortunately, where it comes out of the process ultimately currently it's in our wastewater flow so as we do the GenX production unit we put all the waste into tankers, it's a small amount of water that's generated. If we tried to do the same thing on this one, it would be three tankers per day

going out because it's just a lot of flow." -- Mike Johnson, Chemours  
Fayetteville Works environmental manager

Check back later for more on this developing story.

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